

## Heroin and Cocaine Fact Sheet

### HEROIN

Changes in the brain are responsible for heroin addiction. Using heroin activates the brain's opiate receptors and increases the amount of dopamine released, which results in a short-lived rush. By acting on the opiate receptors, users can experience feelings of euphoria and decreased pain. Users can also experience nausea and cloudy thinking. After repeated use, receptors decrease and heroin users need more and more of the drug just to feel the same effects, or to avoid withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal symptoms are intense for a heroin addict, and include insomnia, muscle and bone pain, vomiting, and cold flashes.

Word Bank: opiate, addiction, rush, withdrawal, receptors

### COCAINE

Cocaine prevents the normal reabsorption of dopamine during neurotransmission. This causes a build-up of dopamine in the synapse, which gives a cocaine-user strong feelings of pleasure. When a person stops using cocaine, dopamine levels decrease and the person needs more of the drug to restore the dopamine level and to feel normal again. Repeated cocaine use can cause damage to neurons and lead to problems with memory and learning. Cocaine withdrawal can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, and paranoia.

Word Bank: dopamine, memory, reabsorption, depression, synapse

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